

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJ: CUBAN LIGHT INDUSTRY/INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANS

1. USINT OFFICER, APRIL 6, CALLED ON CECILIO GONZALEZ TORRES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND OCTAVIO CASTILLA (SON OF CECE AMERICAS DIVISION DIRECTOR OF SAME NAME), VICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OF IMEXIN, THE ENTERPRISE OF STATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC COLLABORATION (CECE) CHARGED WITH PURCHASE OF COMPLETE INSTALLATIONS IN FIELDS OF LIGHT INDUSTRY, PHARMACEUTICALS, COMMUNICATION, AND EDUCATION. IMEXIN ALSO HANDLES CONTRACTING FOR PORT INSTALLATIONS, AIRPORTS, AND RAILROADS.

2. WITH REFERENCE TO APRIL 5 FIDEL CASTRO VISIT TO JAPANESE-CONTRACTED SANTA CLARA TEXTILE FACTORY, GONZALEZ RELUCTANTLY CONFIRMED THAT IT HAS RUN INTO DELAYS, AS HAVE LARGER SOVIET-BUILT SANTIAGO TEXTILE COMBINE AND HAVANA YARN WORKS. UNLIKE GRANMA ACCOUNT OF CASTRO VISIT, HOWEVER, GONZALEZ ATTRIBUTED CONSTRUCTION LAGS NOT TO DELAYS IN CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT DELIVERIES, BUT RATHER TO SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED CONSTRUCTION MANPOWER. (COMMENT: THIS ECHOES JAPANESE PLANT PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS ABOUT DRAFTING OF WORKERS AT SANTA CLARA FOR
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ETHIOPIA/ANGOLA AND DIVERSION OF WHOLE CONSTRUCTION BRIGADES TO OTHER PROJECTS. SEE HAVANA 634. CASTRO VISIT APPARENTLY WILL RESULT IN DOUBLING EMPLOYMENT AT SANTA CLARA TO 1700 TO PERMIT TWENTY-FOUR HOUR WORK. PROJECT COMPLETION - ORIGINALLY ENVISAGED FOR THIS YEAR - WILL NOT BE SCHEDULED FOR END OF 1979, RATHER THAN 1980 DATE TO WHICH COMPLETION HAD BEEN SLIPPED BECAUSE OF LABOR PROBLEMS. ACCORDING TO GONZALEZ, THIS WILL REQUIRE DELAY-

ING COMPLETION OF SOVIET TEXTILE PLANTS TO NEXT FIVE YEAR PLAN. NECESSITY TO MOVE QUICKLY TO COMMENCE PRODUCTION AT SANTA CLARA MAY BE LINKED TO HARD CURRENCY SQUEEZE WHICH HAS LIMITED IMPORTATION OF SYNTHETIC FIBERS AND CLOTH. VICE MINISTER OF LIGHT INDUSTRY TOLD US LAST WEEK THAT ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT OF OBLIGATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS ARE NOW PRODUCED FROM CLOTH MADE IN CUBA, RATHER THAN FROM IMPORTED CLOTH AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS. CURRENT TEXTILE CAPACITIES, NOW DEVOTED TO SCHOOL UNIFORMS, MAY THUS NOW BE INADEQUATE TO SATISFY NORMAL, ALBEIT RATIONED, CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS.)

3. WITH REGARD TO LIGHT INDUSTRY SECTOR IN NEXT 1981-86 FIVE YEAR PLAN, GONZALEZ SAID THAT FUNDAMENTAL WEIGHT OF INVESTMENT WOULD PROBABLY CONSIST OF COMPLETION OF TWO ABOVE-MENTIONED SOVIET TEXTILE PLANTS, AMPLIFICATION AND MODERNIZATION OF OLDER AMERICAN-BUILT TEXTILE FACTORIES, AND ACQUISITION OF NEW COSMETIC AND PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES.

4. ON INFRASTRUCTURE SIDE OF OPERATIONS, GONZALEZ AND CASTILLA WERE EXTRAORDINARILY SECRETIVE, SAYING ONLY THAT CURRENT PROJECTS INCLUDE INSTALLATION OF MORE ROLL-ON-ROLL-OFF AND CONTAINER FACILITIES IN HAVANA HARBOR, MODERNIZATION OF HAVANA'S JOSE MARTI AIRPORT AND COMPLETION OF NEW CROSS-ISLAND RAILROAD TRUNK LINE. THEY SAID THAT, WITH REGARD TO BOTH HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION (I.E., THE CROSS-ISLAND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EIGHT-LANE HIGHWAY) AND EXPANSION OF AIRPORT RUNWAYS AND TERMINAL BUILDINGS, ALL CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS IS PROVIDED, AND CONSTRUCTION PERFORMED, BY CUBAN ORGANISMS. WITH REGARD TO AIRPORTS, SOVIETS PROVIDE HANGARS, NAVIGATION AIDS, AND FLIGHT CONTROL EQUIPMENT. GONZALEZ SAID HE DID NOT KNOW OF ANY PROJECTS FOR NEW AIRPORTS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT FIVE YEAR PLAN, THOUGH MANY EXISTING AIRPORTS WILL BE EXPANDED.

5. GONZALEZ STATED THAT CUBANS ARE NOW CONSIDERING PLANS TO BEGIN EXPORT OF NON-HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AS WELL AS WHOLE LIGHT INDUSTRY PLANTS. (FYI CUBANS HAVE ALREADY CONSTRUCTED HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES IN ANGOLA AND VIET-NAM. END FYI).

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